

School Counsellor Newsletter



The power of developing an “Attitude of Gratitude”

Edition Twenty

“Gratitude can make your life happier and more satisfying.... when we express gratitude we strengthen our relationships.”

Dr Martin Seligman

“Gratitude opens your heart and carries the urge to give back..... It is not mindless manners or tit-for-tat reciprocity...true gratitude is heartfelt and unscripted.”

Dr Barbara Fredrickson

This newsletter is the third in a series of newsletters looking at our Wellbeing Superpowers. Building on the Wellbeing superpowers of Breathing and Mindfulness, this newsletter will focus on Gratitude. As you can see from the quotes above, both from experts on positivity, being grateful empowers us to create meaningful and beneficial experiences in our lives. As with Breathing and Mindfulness, many teachers at Medbury already incorporate learning around Gratitude into their teaching and it is also part of the Aristotle programme across several levels. I also made a Gratitude teaching resource, similar to this newsletter, available to teachers for the school closure period. I do hope you talk to your son about the gratitude activities he has experienced so that you can develop this skill into your daily practices.

Gratitude is defined as being thankful and showing appreciation, including a willingness to return kindness. We can show gratitude in many ways from the simple gesture of smiling

or saying thank you, to larger gestures such as helping someone in need, and in meaningful ways such as actively listening to others. Being grateful creates many of the same emotional, mental and physical benefits of breathing and mindfulness, such as feeling motivated to learn or exercise, being physically healthier and having better relationships. So how can you develop an “Attitude of Gratitude” even further than what you are already doing so you, and those around you, can really benefit from this Wellbeing superpower? You could try these activities with your son:

- Start a **Gratitude Diary**: At the end of each day, or week, write down 3 things/people/activities etc you are grateful for. VIA’s Character Strengths use a form of this in their [Three Good Things](#) activity. It helps you focus on what is good in your life, when you are going through a difficult time, to shift your perspective and decrease negative emotions.
- **Write a letter** to someone you are grateful to have in your life, explaining why you feel this way. Research suggests that simply the act of writing the letter is beneficial but actually sending it to the person is even more meaningful - for both the sender and receiver.
- Try **Gratitude meditations**: [Guided meditation for gratitude](#), [The Gratitude Tree](#), [Land of Gratitude](#).

- Start the habit of **Grateful family dinners**: at the dinner table, share 1-3 things you have been grateful for that day. Build on this by leaving notes for family members, under their pillows or on their desks, to tell them how you appreciate them. Or start a gratitude wall, or on the fridge, where you can display these notes. You could even make a [Gratitude Tree](#). This link takes you to a website with many excellent ideas in regard to gratitude, including the coloring in activity on the next page.

Writing this newsletter has reminded me to be grateful to you. Thank you for reading this newsletter. I appreciate the time you have taken to do so and I do hope it is helpful for you, and your family, in some way.



Jenelle Hooson

Jenelle is a Registered Provisional Member with NZAC (New Zealand Association of Counsellors).

If you wish to discuss the services the school counsellor can provide please see your son’s homeroom teacher or Amos Pilgrim amos.pilgrim@medbury.school.nz.

